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Analysis of training needs: what it is and how to conduct it

All the things you need to know about training needs analysis.

The **analysis of training needs** is the process through which a company identifies the training and development needs of its internal resources and is the first step to **achieve successful training interventions**. But that's not all. The detection of training needs allows to reflect on the company's work and to know better the company and the sector in which it operates.

For these reasons, an effective needs analysis must take into account not only the set of **skills, abilities and knowledge** of the employees involved, but also the internal and external context of the company, as well as the system of mutual expectations between the company and its resources.

How to conduct a training needs analysis

Step 1 - Identify business objectives

Before anything else, it analyzes the business environment and identifies the company's objectives. The objectives can be very concrete (e.g. migrate an office to new software) or intangible (e.g. improve customer service). Only starting from a careful analysis of the company's objectives can you understand what you need and what you want to achieve with training.

Step 2 - Identify skills

At this point, you will be able to move on to an analysis of the skills needed for your company: prepare a company organisation chart that includes all the positions within the company and, for each position, the set of skills, knowledge and abilities required, as well as the necessary qualifications and experience.

Step 3 - Identify training needs

Once you've listed what skills are needed to perform each task, you'll need to understand if your employees have them and identify any **training gaps**. Then check the performance of each employee and assess whether they meet the required standards. As we will see below, you can do this by taking into account interviews and questionnaires, employee performance evaluations, customer questionnaires, etc. Regardless of the tool you adopt, it may be useful to rely on specific software, such as the Human Resources Management module of **DynDevice LMS**, which allows you, among other things, to manage in depth tasks and skills associated with employees and to assign training courses to fill skills gaps.

Step 4 - Process the collected data

At this point, identify the team that will have to manage the information collected. It can be internal or external to the company and will have to analyse business objectives and training gaps to determine what kind of training needs to be given to achieve the desired level of competence.

Once the data has been processed, all you have to do is **plan the training interventions** by defining in detail the specific contents, identifying the teachers and teaching tools, as well as the logistical and organizational aspects. But remember: your activity doesn't stop there. Once the training and refresher courses have been delivered, you will have to move on to the **evaluation** phase to highlight the results obtained, in the short and long term, with respect to the set objectives.

Tools for the analysis of training needs

Now that we have seen what are the key steps to identify your company's training needs, let's see what are the main analysis methods you can use (individually or, better, in integration with each other) to gather information about your employees' performance and skills.

Questionnaires for the analysis of training needs

Although self-detection is often unreliable, this method of analysis can still be a starting point. How competent do your employees consider themselves? What would they like to be trained on?

The training needs analysis questionnaire allows you to collect these answers in paper or digital format, with open or closed questions. Through this tool you can reach many people in a short time and collect easily quantifiable data. In addition, if you think it is appropriate, you can make the compilation anonymous to encourage employees to be more transparent.

Individual interviews

The individual interview is a particularly effective method because it generates **participation and engagement**, but requires time for data collection and processing. In some cases, employees may not feel comfortable and may have difficulty communicating their needs. The interviewer must therefore have excellent communication and listening skills and must be able to stimulate the active participation of the interviewee in order to bring out both expressed and latent needs.

Focus group

The focus group is a survey technique based on **discussion within a small group** of people and can be aimed at analysing tasks, skills or internal team dynamics. This method is particularly effective when you want to detect complex opinions (difficult to summarize within a questionnaire) and at the same time you want to facilitate the comparison between a limited number of subjects.

Observation

Another method of identifying training needs is to observe the work done by employees. The key to conducting effective observations is to make them informal and make it clear to employees that they are not punitive, but have the sole purpose of identifying areas for improvement that could be the subject of training.

Read also " How to conduct a training needs analysis with limited resources".